



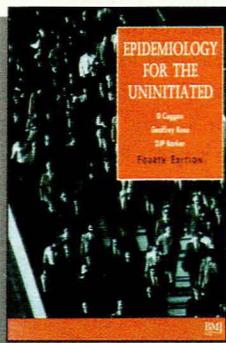
BOOKS

EPIDEMIOLOGY FOR THE UNINITIATED*

Fourth edition. By D Coggon, Geoffrey Rose and DJP Barker. Pp. 69. £11. BMJ. 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1102-3.

This publication is quite clearly popular, having first been published in 1979.

If you are truly 'uninitiated' in epidemiology and wish to know something about the definition of terms, the relative merits of the various formats of investigation (e.g. cross-sectional study, longitudinal study, case control studies) and something about the application of modern epidemiology, all is revealed in this booklet. It simply abounds with definitions of the terms and sets them out clearly and unambiguously. For example, birth rate, fertility rate, infant mortality rate, stillbirth rate and perinatal mortality rate are all defined in one table.



Another very useful table demonstrates the differences between sensitivity, specificity and predictive value. This latter notion is particularly relevant for any clinician who uses tests to detect disease and is often confused with sensitivity and specificity.

Overall the book is written in non-technical language with hardly any formal statistical formulae and is fairly well illustrated with examples from the literature.

As the discipline of epidemiology is becoming progressively more important to the clinician (recently having acquired the guise of 'evidence-based medicine' and 'clinical epidemiology'), a thorough understanding of the basic concepts and terminology for the uninitiated in this area is readily obtainable through this book. The reviewer strongly recommends this as essential reading for all clinicians who wish to keep up to date with some of the most important concepts in the application of new information in clinical practice.

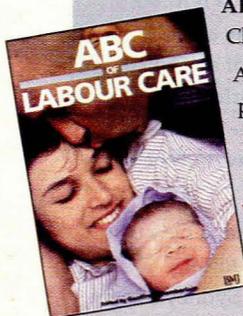
S Louw

the important topics relevant to the practice of paediatrics in southern Africa. It is highly recommended reading for undergraduates and in some areas (neurology and neonatology) provides adequate information for post-graduates. The logical format with clearly structured tables, figures and illustrations makes friendly reading while the colour pictures are of the highest possible standard. The only major limitation of this book lies in the omission of two major chapters in paediatrics; viz. acute respiratory infections and HIV infections/AIDS. Minor criticisms include the lack of a subsection of recent advances at the end of each chapter e.g. polymerase chain reaction, ligase chain reactions and serological tests for mycobacterial antibodies under the section tuberculosis; leucotriene receptor antagonist and the mechanism of cellular inflammation under asthma, omission of important subsections under the sections allergy (management of anaphylaxis) and infant feeding (composition of different milk feeds) and their indications; scanty information on connective tissue diseases under arthritis; discussion of DMSA/MVCUG under UTI. Despite these limitations the book would prove to be excellent resource material for undergraduates grappling to understand diseases in paediatrics.

Topics which should be considered for the next edition include the directly observed therapy and the WHO classification for tuberculosis (suspected, probable or confirmed tuberculosis); the inadequate delivery of drugs with the paper cup and the need for a spacer with a face mask for infants; increased emphasis on the association of UTI and malnutrition; a figure on the different antibodies in viral hepatitis B; and the role of a 72-hour stool observation and intra-operative cholangiogram for cholestasis.

P M Jeena

BOOK MANAGER'S CHOICE



ABC of Labour Care, edited by Geoffrey Chamberlain, published by BMJ, R181.

A comprehensive guide to the management of patients in labour containing well-illustrated information on key areas, including the importance of the team approach and the role of the GP, physiology and management of normal labour, birth environment, operative delivery, pain relief and obstetric emergencies.

* Book titles marked may be ordered directly from SAMA Health and Medical Publishing Book Department, Private Bag X1, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126, e-mail publishing@samedical.org or jstrydom@samedical.org. Visit our website at www.samedical.org

TOPICS IN PAEDIATRICS

Edited by Julian Bassin and Neil Ginsberg. Pp. 232. Illustrated. R100. Julmar Communications. ISBN 0-620-21632-8.

The book *Topics in Paediatrics*, written by a panel of local experienced experts, provides an excellent overview of most of



CONFRONTING AIDS. PUBLIC PRIORITIES IN A GLOBAL EPIDEMIC*

A World Bank Policy Research Report. Pp. xxv + 353. R145. Oxford University Press. 1997. ISBN 0-19-52117-0.

This is a World Bank Policy Research Report, principally authored by Meadover and Martha Ainsworth with contributions from numerous well-known authorities on the epidemic. It attempts to present and analyse some of the most important features, associations and determinants of the AIDS pandemic and to offer pragmatic options in confronting and controlling it. The report is aimed at high level policy and decision makers, government officials, activists, academics, epidemiologists, economists and various other role players involved with the epidemic. The report's emphasis and orientation is on low- and middle-income countries and the role of government in providing appropriate policy. It has a wealth of well-presented information and appropriate statistics on the epidemic and on economic issues, demographics, impacts, etc. It is highly recommended reading and is particularly relevant to South Africa.

The book begins with a comprehensive outline of the natural history of the disease and the social and economic impact of the epidemic on a country and the relationship of various factors such as poverty, gender issues, development, impact on life expectancy and the spread of the AIDS epidemic. Epidemic dynamics, predictions and future estimates are provided. The text is supported with numerous tables and graphs. A very comprehensive chapter deals with numerous aspects of the epidemiology of AIDS, both on a global and regional basis, dynamics and determinants of spread, and potential impact of prevention efforts on the epidemiology. The above two chapters highlight the critical leadership role of government in responding to the epidemic which leads into a presentation of the various efficient and equitable strategies for preventing HIV/AIDS. Interventions highlighted include activities and policies promoting social norms conducive to adopting safe behaviour, improving the status of women and issues relating to guarantees for basic inheritance, property and child rights, rape and safe blood supplies, among others.

Coping with the epidemic and the provision of care are dealt with in detail in another section. Various care options as well as their economic considerations and health policy decisions necessary to promote the appropriate level and form of care are discussed. The impact of AIDS on health expenditure is provided and strategies to cope with this as well as the social and economic impact of the epidemic on the individual and on households are given. The role of government in coping with the impact on health care and on poverty is concluded in this section.

Partnerships between government, civic organisations, NGOs and donor agencies are addressed in a separate section and the challenge faced by governments to define their role in collaboration with these role players is outlined.

The final chapters summarise the main policy recommendations of the report and discuss opportunities for countries to change the course of the epidemic at various stages.

Clive Evian

BOOKS RECEIVED

The receipt of these books is acknowledged, and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the sender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits. The SAMJ does not publish unsolicited reviews.

Programming for Adolescent Health and Development.*

Report of a WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF Study Group on Programming for Adolescent Health and Development. Technical Report Series No. 886. Pp. vi + 260. SwFr56/US\$50.40. WHO. 1999. ISBN 92-4-120886-4.

The World Health Report 1999. Making a Difference.* Pp. xxi + 121. SwFr15/US\$13.50. WHO. 1999. ISBN 92-4-156-947.

Food Safety Issues Associated with Products from Aquaculture.* Report of a Joint FAO/NACA/WHO Study Group. Technical Report Series No. 883. Pp. vii + 55. SwFr14/US\$12.60. WHO. 1999. ISBN 92-4-120883X.

Evaluation of Certain Food Additives and Contaminants.* Forty-ninth Report of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives. Technical Report Series No. 884. Pp. vii + 96. SwFr20/US\$18.00. WHO. 1999. ISBN 92-4-120884-8.

WHO Expert Committee on Specifications for Pharmaceutical Preparations.* Thirty-fifth Report. Technical Report Series No. 885. Pp. vi + 156. SwFr35/US\$31.50. WHO. 1999. ISBN 92-4-120885-6.

Rapid Health Assessment Protocols for Emergencies.* Pp. vi + 97. SwFr31/US\$27.90. WHO. 1999. ISBN 92-4-154515-1.

Copper.* Environmental Health Criteria No. 200. Pp. xxii + 360. SwFr72/US\$64.80. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-157200-0.

Flame Retardants: Tris(chloropropyl) Phosphate and Tris(2-chloroethyl) Phosphate.* Environmental Health Criteria No. 209. Pp. xix + 106. SwFr27/US\$24.30. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-157209-4.

Morphine and the Relief of Cancer Pain. Information for Patients, Families and Friends. By Robert Twycross. Pp. vi + 26. £3.95. Beaconsfield Publishers Ltd. 1999. ISBN 9-780906-584507.

Bowel Control. Information and Practical Advice. By Christine Norton and Michael A Kamm. Pp. 48. Illustrated. £5.95. Beaconsfield Publishers Ltd. 1999. ISBN 9-780906.